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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000263

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SUBJECT: ALLIES REACT POSITIVELY TO U.S. BRIEFING ON
MISSILE DEFENSE

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: On April 19, Senior U.S. Defense and State, officials briefed the North Atlantic Council on U.S. plans to counter the threat to Europe and North America posed by the Iranian and DPRK missile programs. The briefers emphasized our willingness to be transparent with Allies, make our system complementary with any future NATO system, and cooperate with the Russians. The briefings were very well received by the Allies. There was broad agreement on the need for Alliance solidarity, especially in discussions with Moscow; to persevere in seeking Russia's cooperation, to continue discussing Missile Defense at NATO, and to maintain transparency within the Alliance and with Moscow through the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Several PermReps called for an updated NATO study on an Alliance TMD program that would take into account the U.S. program, and for the Oslo ministerial to demonstrate Allied unity on missile defense. End Summary.

MD) RISING ON NATO'S AGENDA

12. (C) Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman, Missile Defense Agency Director Lt Gen Trey Obering, and Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Non-Proliferation John Rood provided Missile Defense (MD) briefing to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on April 19. The NAC was reinforced by MD experts or higher level officials from capitals. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer reminded PermReps that MD has been on the NATO agenda since its 2002 Prague Summit, that Heads of State and Government had tasked further study at last year's Riga Summit, and that PermReps had discussed it three times since then. The SYG set the stage for U.S. briefings with updates on what the Alliance had already undertaken in the field of Missile Defense.

- Assistant Secretary General (ASG) for Investment Peter Flory reported on the Alliance's Active Layered Theater Ballistic Defense Program (ALTBMD), which was on track toward initial operational capability to protect against short to medium range ballistic missiles in 2010. A feasibility study on a broader Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system tasked at Prague had been completed for the Riga summit, but would need to be revisited in light of the U.S. proposal to base a radar in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland as a "third pillar" of its MD effort to extend coverage over most of Europe. Flory also stressed that cooperation with Russia on Theater Missile Defense had been approved as early as 2002 as one of the initial elements of joint work within the

NATO-Russia Council (NRC).

- ASG for Defense Policy and Planning John Colston summarized other Alliance activities in the MD sphere since Prague, describing the work of the Executive Working Group (EWG) and the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation (SGP). These included preparing a new Allied threat assessment, command and control requirements, cost implications, and legal and environmental implications of MD systems. Colston urged Allies to provide political guidance that would allow the EWG to provide substantive advice on MD alternatives to the NAC by the end of 2007.

MAKING THE CASE FOR PROTECTION

13. (S) USD(P) Edelman, MDA Director Obering, and A/S Rood provided a comprehensive, compelling case for sharing the benefits of the U.S. MD capabilities with the Alliance. Allied reaction was uniformly positive.

- USD(P) Edelman stressed that Alliance security must be indivisible; the U.S. wanted Europe, as well as North America, to be protected against missile attack. This should be done with maximum transparency among Allies, with Russia, and with the public. Edelman told PermReps that President Bush had offered BMD cooperation to President Putin, and talks with Russia were continuing. For the Alliance, he said, extending coverage of the U.S. system would carry enormous economic and strategic benefits.

- Paul Kozlusk, senior analyst representing the Director of National Intelligence, briefed on the evolution of the Iranian and DPRK missile programs, emphasizing that both

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countries had demonstrated over time the intent and capability to develop longer range and increasingly more sophisticated missiles.

- A/S Rood reported on the talks his inter-agency team held in Moscow earlier that week. Responding to Russia's concerns about MD-related missile and radar sites in Poland and the Czech Republic, he said, the American team had offered to cooperate "across the full spectrum of capabilities" -- exploring new concepts, research and development, MD systems and components, early warning data, interoperability, and joint exercises. Although they had responded to many of the Russians' specific concerns, Rood reported, Moscow continued to voice them in public.

- MDA Director Obering emphasized the defensive nature of the proposed European site of the U.S. MD system. Only 10 interceptors will be placed in Poland; they will not carry warheads, and intercepted hostile missiles kinetically. The system would be interoperable with whatever NATO might choose to build. And to those concerned about the debris falling from intercepted missiles, he said that debris was preferable to intact nuclear warheads and that debris from missiles launched from Iran that were intercepted over Europe would continue on a path toward the U.S. and fall short (likely in the Atlantic Ocean). He then showed a series of video scenarios of launches from Iran against the U.S. and Europe. The U.S. was protected against the limited strikes that Iran could muster against it, but Europe suffered missile strikes on a varying number of capitals under scenarios where it remained entirely undefended. However, the European pillar of the U.S. MD system combined with a complementary NATO system designed to engage shorter range missiles offered a greater capability to engage a wide range of missile threats. PermReps watched the simulated ABM hits on conference room screens with rapt attention.

U.S. PARTNERS CALL FOR SUPPORT

14. (C) Poland and the Czech Republic) the two Allies engaged in bilateral MD talks with the U.S.) took the floor

first. They were followed by interventions from 20 additional Allies. (Only the three Baltic nations remained silent.) Not a single critical comment was voiced, although there were many calls for further study, for full transparency, and for taking account of Russia's concerns) echoing points made by the U.S. briefers.

- Poland's Under Secretary of State Witold Waszczykowski recounted the U.S.-Polish consultations on MD this year, which were already in the public record. He emphasized that the U.S. system would help protect all Allies, not just those hosting the facilities. A possible Alliance-wide MD work should not impede the U.S. system, he urged. While acknowledging sensitivity to Russian threats, Waszczykowski judged that those threats were motivated by internal politics, the international attention they drew to Russia's power, and the desire to drive a wedge between Allies.

- Czech First Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar was the first of many Allies to pick up Edelman's point that Alliance security must be indivisible. Prague's interest in hosting a U.S. radar was totally transparent, including even a dedicated website (www.radarbrdy.cz). It had also been transparent with Russia, hosting Deputy Foreign Minister Kiselyak and exchanging presidential visits. Kiselyak, Pojar noted caustically, had claimed that there would be no possible Iranian or North Korean missile threat to Europe for "several decades," contradicting other public statements from Moscow. Pojar also said he could not understand how Kiselyak could make such confident predictions about the threat.

ALLIES REACT POSITIVELY TO U.S. PRESENTATION

15. (C) Compared to the usual thrust-and-parry of NAC discussions, Allied responses were strikingly positive.

- Appreciation for U.S. transparency and calls for continuing that transparency to win the support of skeptical publics and engage Russia constructively were universal themes.

- No nation denied the threat posed by rogue nations with

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ballistic missiles, although the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany stressed their preference for prevention over defense. Belgium admitted that "of course, NATO should guard against threats from unstable nations;" France called that threat "a reality," although it grumbled that deterrence remains a valid concept; Germany said it "must be addressed," and there was near-universal agreement that NATO should be the forum for addressing it.

- Many Allies said they were interested in further Allied threat assessment and work with Russia on a NRC missile joint threat assessment.

- Bulgaria, Portugal, Romania, Turkey, and the UK, as well as the Czech Republic, called for complete coverage of the Alliance. Virtually every Ally stressed the need to address Russia's concerns, but Canada, the Czech Republic, Italy, and the UK made clear that Russia could not exercise a veto over Alliance MD decisions.

- Belgium, Spain, and Turkey expressed worries about the debris from missiles impacted in flight. Spain sought details on what stage of flight intermediate-range missiles could be intercepted. The UK and the Netherlands signaled concern over the cost of MD coverage for Europe.

- Six Allies specifically called for revising the NATO Missile Defense Feasibility Study to account for the opportunities offered by the U.S. proposal for a European pillar to its own MD system.

SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE AT OSLO

¶6. (C) The SYG concluded that Allies showed broad agreement on continuing the MD discussion at NATO in preference to any other forum; that there was a common recognition for the threat posed by rogue nations with missiles; and that Alliance security should be indivisible. He urged Allied Foreign Ministers meeting at Oslo to deliver a consistent message to that effect.

NULAND